

The Commissioner of Patents

29 November 2004

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Madam

**IN THE MATTER OF International Patent Application No. PCT/AU2003/001496
in the name of COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH
ORGANISATION
Entitled MERCERISATION OF CELLULOSIC FIBRES
Our Ref: JSB:SP:FP18655**

We refer to the Written Opinion dated 14 July 2004 on the above-referenced international patent application.

We respectfully submit that the invention as defined by claim 1, and consequently each of the claims appended to it, does in fact involve an inventive step over D1.

D1 discloses a static system, which involves constraining the fibres by pressing them between mesh plates, and an arrangement of apparatus components which would not readily be converted into a continuous system. Even if it was considered obvious to convert the static system into a continuous system, we submit that the continuous system would involve transportation of the fibres between mesh belts. However, typical mesh belts that might be used in a continuous process would not be designed to ensure that the fibres would be held in such a way as to prevent shrinkage. Typical mesh belts would only hold the fibres loosely, and therefore would not prevent shrinkage. Accordingly, conversion of the process described in D1 into a continuous process would not result in the process involving each of the features claimed in claim 1 of the present application.

In addition to this, in the system described and claimed by the present applicants, it becomes possible to actually *stretch the fibres*, which leads to the considerable advantages described in the present application. The static system can only prevent fibres from shrinking, and does not enable the stretching of fibres. Accordingly, the static and continuous systems cannot be considered to be equivalents as suggested by the Examiner.

GRIFFITH HACK

PATENT AND TRADE MARK ATTORNEYS

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Favourable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Yours faithfully
GRIFFITH HACK

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